Maintenance of law and order lies primarily in the domain of the concerned State Governments. The Central Government also closely monitors the situation and provides assistance by various means to the concerned State Governments.

Scheme for protection of witnesses

3169. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to enforce any scheme for the protection of witnesses; and

(b) if so, the details of essential features of the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI V. RADHIKA SELVI): (a) The Law Commission of India in its 198th Report on 'Witness Identity Protection and Witness Protection Programmes' has suggested comprehensive review of witness protection. Since, the Criminal Law and the Criminal Procedure are on the Concurrent List of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India this requires consultation with State Governments and Union Territory Administrations. The Report has been referred to all the State Government and Union Territory Administration for their comments/views. No time frame can be fixed in this regard.

(b) Witness Protection Programmes refer to witness protection outside the Court. At the instance of the public prosecutor, the witness can be given a new identity by a Magistrate after conducting an *exparte* inquiry in his chambers. In a case of likelihood of danger to his life, he is given a different identity and may, if need be, even relocated in different place along with his depandants till the trial of the case against the accused is completed. The expenses for maintenance of all the persons must be met by the State Legal Aid Authority through the District Legal Aid Authority. The witness has to sign an MoU which will list out the obligations of the State as well the witness. Being admitted to the programme, the witness has an obligation to depose and the State has an obligation to protect him physically outside Court. Breach of MoU by the witness will result in his being taken out of the programme.

Rise in naxalite activities

† 3170. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that naxalite activities have been increasing in the country for the last few years;

(b) if so, the number of districts identified in naxal affected States in April, 2004;

(c) the number of such States and districts during December, 2007 alongwith their names; and

(d) the reasons for this rapid increase in the naxalite activities?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi